

Laona Ranger Dwelling and Garage
(Forest Service Site No. 09-06-05-206)
Highway 8
Laona Vicinity
Forest County
Wisconsin

HABS NO. WI-309

HABS
WIS,
21-LAON V,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORICAL AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS
WIS,
21-LAON.V,
1-

LAONA RANGER DWELLING AND GARAGE
(FOREST SERVICE SITE NO. 09-06-05-206) HABS NO. WI-309

Location: U.S. Highway 8 (south and adjacent, 1/4 mile west of Laona),
Laona, Forest County, Wisconsin

USGS Quadrangle: Laona, 7.5 (1972)
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 16.369000.5046240

Present Owner: USDA Forest Service

Present Occupant: Vacant (1990 sale and removal by the Forest Service)

Significance: The Laona Ranger Dwelling was constructed by local artisans and laborers in 1935 through Economic Recovery Act funding. These two buildings: the ranger dwelling and associated garage, constitute all that remains of the original five building Forest Service administrative complex. The significance of this property resides in its association with the Forest Services' dual mission of conservation and economic revitalization. Further, the Colonial Revival style dwelling embodies a unique character and design created from a standard plan available only to Lakes States National Forests. This ranger dwelling represents the only remaining Standard Plan No. 40 building in existence in the state of Wisconsin, and as such has been determined eligible to the National Register of Historic Places.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Laona Ranger Dwelling (also referred to as Forest Service Site No. 09-06-05-206) consists of two closely associated buildings situated in the western fringes of Laona, Wisconsin (Forest County), a logging industry-oriented community dating to 1900. This ranger dwelling and its associated garage were designed by Forest Service architects in 1934 and constructed by local artisans and laborers in 1935 (see data pages Nos. WI-309-5-10 for a copy of the original standard plans No. 26 and 40).

In the mid-19th century the area of northern Wisconsin, that now includes the Nicolet National Forest, possessed an expansive timber resource which drew hundreds of lumber interests to the area. This industrial development spurred the largest population influx that the area had yet witnessed, and shaped the socio-economic framework still in place today. While the logging industry has been a dominant and pervasive industry for over a hundred years, there was a hiatus in the early decades of the 20th century caused by unrestricted cutting practices. The early 20th century was a time when logging and railroad companies were eager to divest themselves of cutover lands, sufficiently eager to falsely promote their agricultural potential. As it was, people new to America or those escaping the cities, came to northern Wisconsin to establish farms. Generally, these were

short-lived and failed ventures, and by the late 1920's there were tens of thousands of acres of tax delinquent land. At this same time, a national conservation ethic had manifested through various statutes allowing the government to acquire "unwanted" private lands for the public good. Amazing as it was considering the country was immersed in the Great Depression, Wisconsin's national forests had acquired over half of their current holdings by the mid 1930's. The Depression was also a period that saw a boom in the development in the federal government's administrative facilities, the work funded through various New Deal programs.

The Nicolet National Forest was established by Congress in 1933, and because of the extensive land base under management consideration, the Forest was divided into five ranger districts. Each district then developed an administrative complex which included an office, warehouses, garages, storage sheds and dwellings. The Nicolet's Laona Ranger District administrative complex was constructed in 1935, and it included an office, warehouse and oil shed that were located several hundred meters east of the ranger's dwelling. The original administrative buildings were removed in 1970, and the ranger's dwelling and garage are all that remains of the complex. Further, this Forest Service Standard Plan No. 40 dwelling is the only one of its type in existence on Forest Service land in Wisconsin (the geographically closest extant example of a standard plan number 40 dwelling is located in Michigan's Hiawatha National Forest, though it was found ineligible to the National Register of Historic Places). A similar example of this architectural style (Forest Service Standard Plan No. 38) has been nominated to the National Register and is referred to as the Washburn Ranger's Dwelling (Bayfield County, Wisconsin). As well, Forest Service Standard Plan No. 30 and 36 dwellings are located at Eagle River and Florence Ranger District facilities respectively. However, these buildings are different in appearance in that they have gabled dormers on the the front side of each building and lack the large front porch present on the Laona Ranger's Dwelling. The unique character and specificity of design merit its eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places.

Forest Service buildings constructed in the Depression Era belong to an architectural idiom that distinguishes them from other architectural expressions in northern Wisconsin. The buildings can specifically be described as Region Nine Period Architecture (Throop, 1983, pg. 124), falling within the style referred to as Colonial Revival. The particular architectural expression manifested at the Laona Ranger's Dwelling was created from a standard plan available only to Lakes States National Forests. Further, all buildings of this era were constructed by the Forest Service with the cooperation of Emergency Conservation Work-related agencies such as the Civilian Conservation Corps. (CCC). The Laona Ranger Dwelling was apparently not a CCC constructed facility, but it was constructed through Economic Recovery Act funding that paid local artisans and laborers to perform the work. The Laona Ranger dwelling is significant in the fact that it is the only "standard plan number 40" dwelling in the state.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Dwelling (Ranger's Dwelling, Standard Plan No. 40): Rectangular in plan

with a front wing, this Colonial Revival style building measures 37'x32' and is one and a half stories. It has a poured concrete foundation featuring a full basement and framing material is wood. The siding is horizontal weatherboard, and it has six-over-six double hung sash windows on both stories. The front entrance is enclosed within a screened-in porch. The roof is steeply pitched and side-gabled with asphalt shingles. The upper half story exhibits a shed type dormer on the front wing, the other section is a projection of the enclosed portion of the house. The roof covering the front wing is a continuation of the main roof, but the straight line of the roof arcs slightly upward at the point where it extends past the building's outer wall. There is an exterior end chimney of red brick with a corresponding interior fireplace on the west side of the building.

During the dwelling's 53 years of existence, it has been in continuous use as a staff residence, and that has necessitated renovation and modernization. Regarding the building's exterior, the most notable alteration is the rear addition added in 1975. It is located on the building's east side, and is a small wing covered by a gabled roof which serves as a vestibule for the first story as well as the basement. Construction of this vestibule included the removal of a hood which covered the doorway and a railing which bounded it. As well, wooden plugs are scattered throughout the siding, these plugs are a function of the installation of foam insulation. Further, the architectural plan called for the placement of decorative louvered shutters adjacent to each window's exterior, and assuming they were installed at the time of construction, they were subsequently removed. (See HABS photograph Nos. WI-309-1A-5A).

With regard to the building's interior, there have been a number of episodes of remodeling rendering it modern in appearance. While the fireplace is original, the ornamental woodwork, wall and floor coverings, cabinetry, plumbing and electrical fixtures have been replaced with modern counterparts.

Garage (Standard Plan No. 26): This building, serving as a one car garage, is rectangular in plan and measures 18'x12'. The foundation is poured concrete. The siding is weatherboard, identical to that found on the dwelling, and all sides except for that which has the garage door have six-over-six double hung sash windows. It has a medium pitched gable roof covered by asphalt shingles. The garage door is the overhead sliding variety and is a replacement of the original which was the hinged and swinging variety. A wood panel door is found on the building's south side. There is a red brick chimney projecting from the roof's interior, though the wood stove it once served has been removed. (See HABS photograph Nos. WI-309-1B-3B).

While located within a broader tract of federally administered land, the property itself is best described as a grass covered lot approximately one-half acre in size, bounded on the north by U.S. Highway Eight, and on all other sides by woodland. The dwelling and garage face northeast and northwest respectively. The garage is situated just southeast of the dwelling. The most salient landscape modifications include the grading associated with lot development along with the driveway which is situated between the highway and garage.

PART 111. SOURCES OF PROJECT INFORMATION

The Forest Service has proposed that both buildings be removed by 1990 to develop an engineering-related facility at this location. In consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office of the State Historical Society, an attempt will be made to sell and relocate the Laona Ranger Dwelling. If no sale is made, demolition will follow the acceptance of this documentation.

Prepared by Mark Bruhy and Angie Teater of the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service-Nicolet National Forest in January, 1989.

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Howard, Donald The WPA and Federal Relief Policy, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 1943.

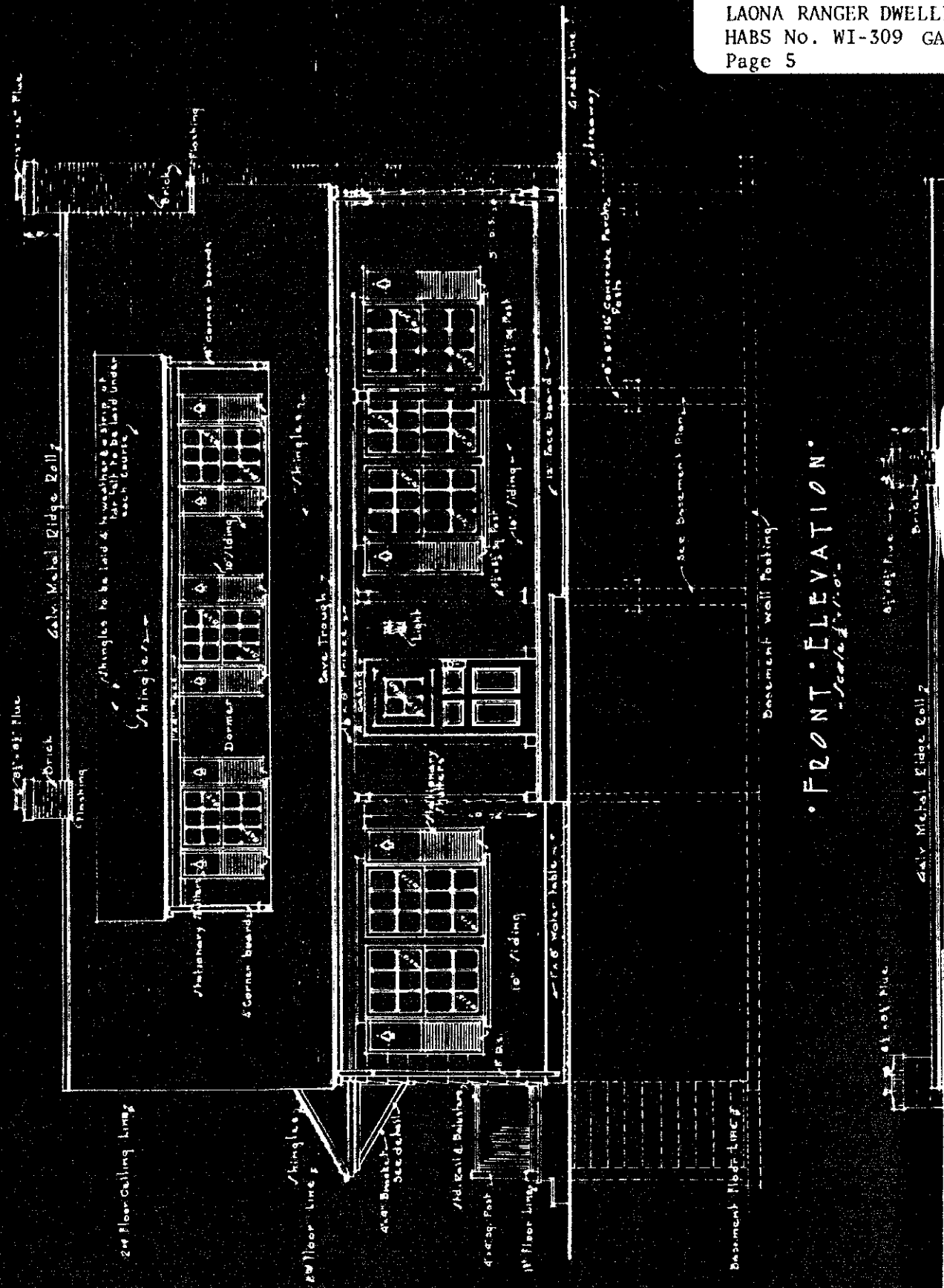
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Kaiser, Harvey H. "The Adirondack Rustic Style", Old House Journal, January/February, 1983.

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Throop, Gail E. "A Characteristic Expression: A Thematic Evaluation of Forest Service Depression-Era Administrative Buildings in the Pacific Northwest", Contract Abstracts and CRM Archaeology, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region, Portland, Oregon, Volume 3, No. 2, 1983.



FRONT ELEVATION
Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"

Copy of original standard plan No. 40:
northeast front of ranger dwelling

SHEET NO. 2

U S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FORESERVICE REGION

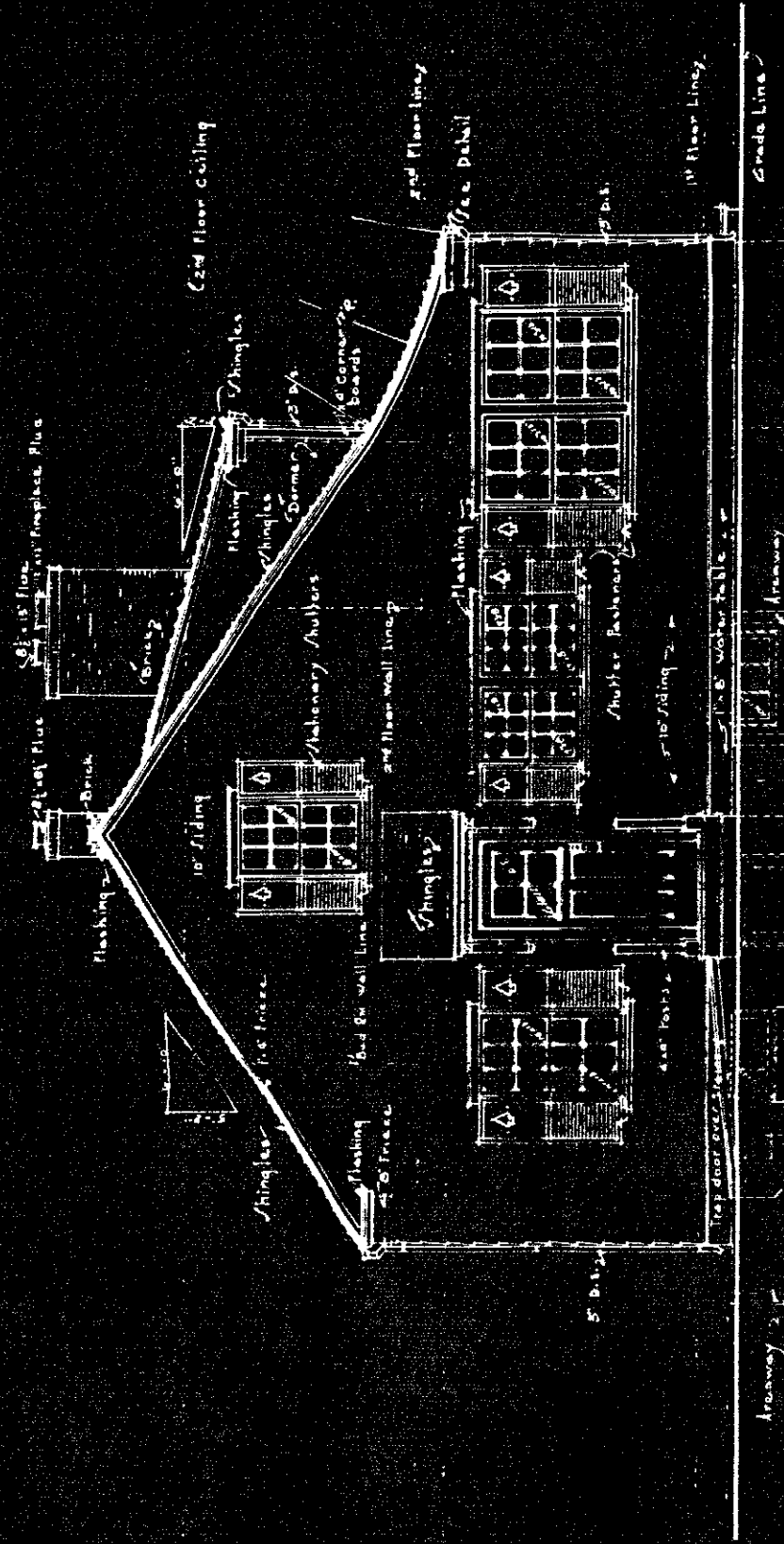
COUNTRY DESIGN -

DANGERS DWELLING

PLAN - No 40.

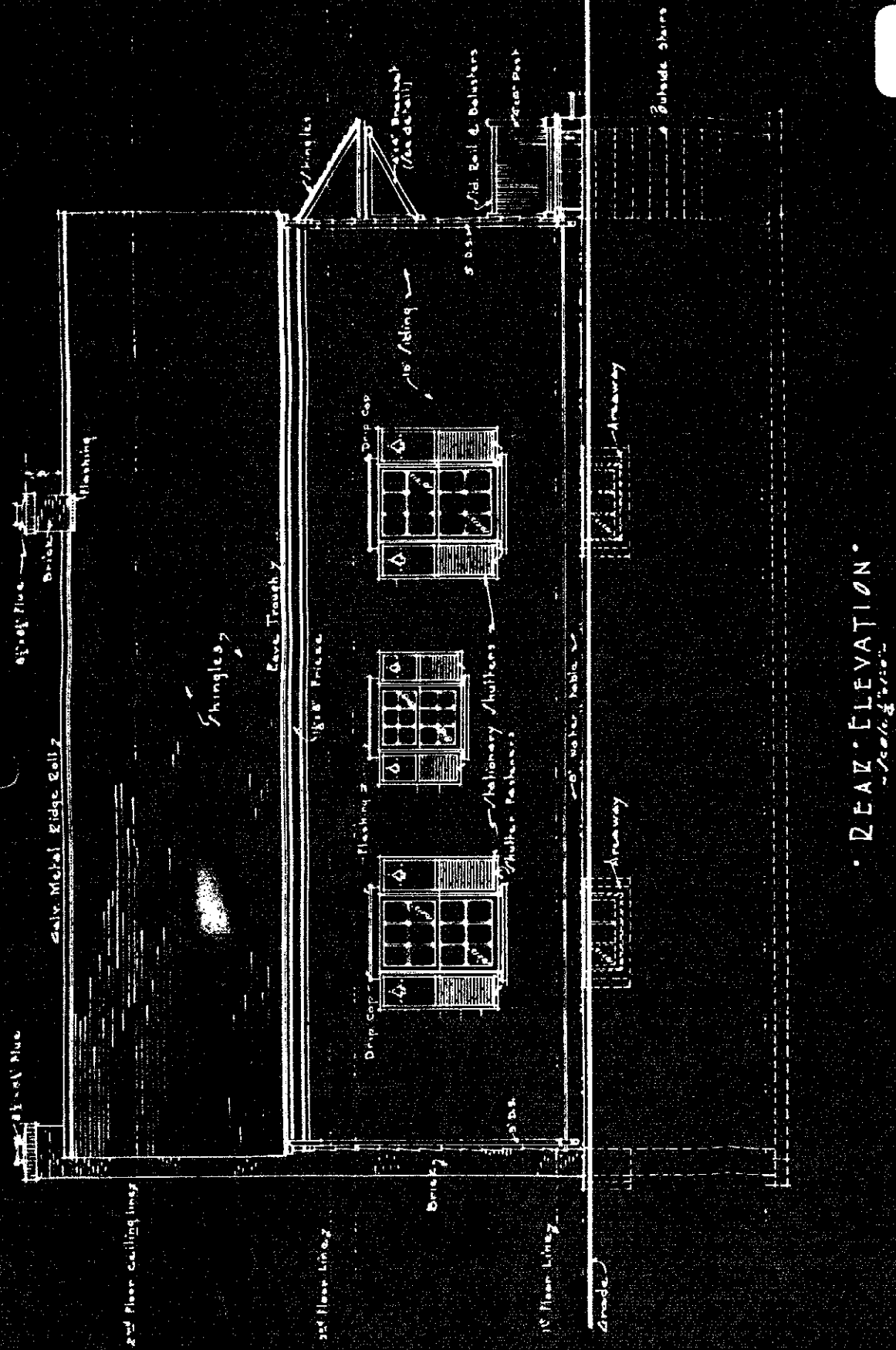
Drawn by E.H.A.
December 20, 1935

SIDE ELEVATION.



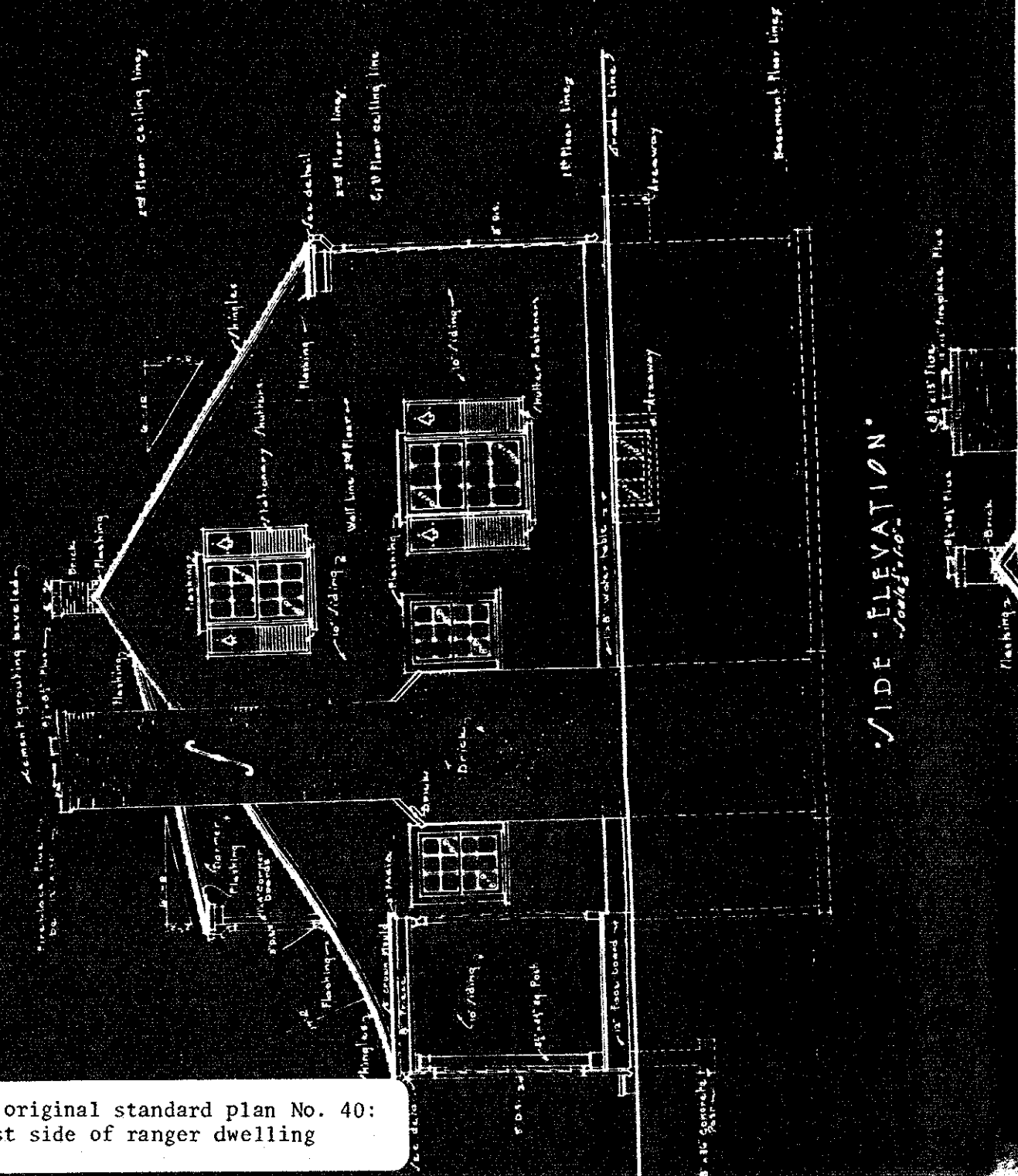
SIDE ELEVATION.

Copy of original standard plan No. 40:
southeast side of ranger dwelling



REAR ELEVATION
Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"

Copy of original standard plan No. 40:
southwest rear of ranger dwelling



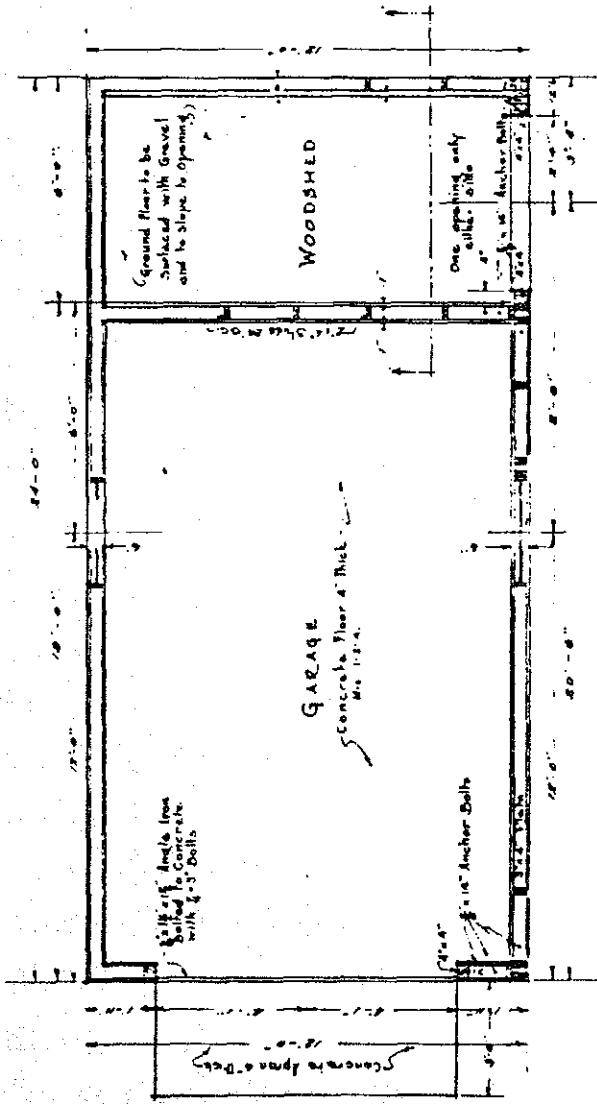
Copy of original standard plan No. 40:
northwest side of ranger dwelling

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREST SERVICE - REGION 9

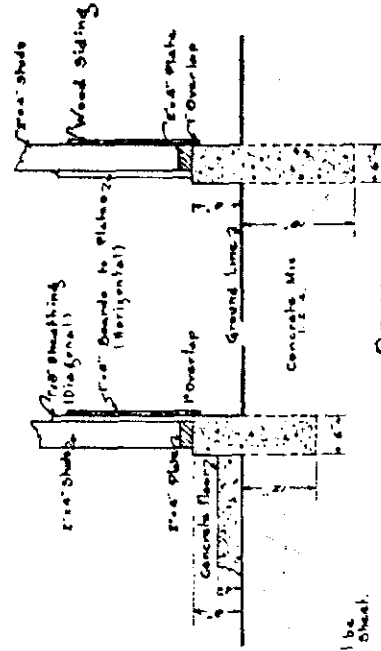
GARAGE & WOODSHED PLAN No 26

Drawn by I.M.A. Approved by H.E.
Date Aug 23, 1934. Scale 3/8" = 1'-0"
Revised 2-11-36



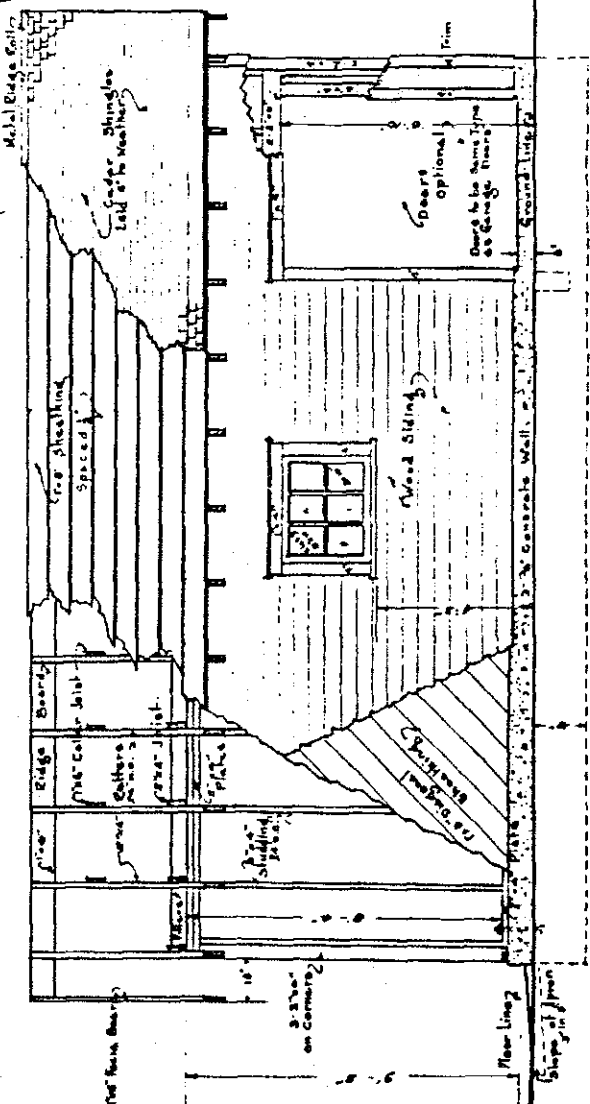
PLAN
Scale 3/8" = 1'-0"

NOTE: Corner boards shall be used only if the majority of siding on wall premises are so constructed. Siding to match other bldgs on same premises. Metal Edge Siding.



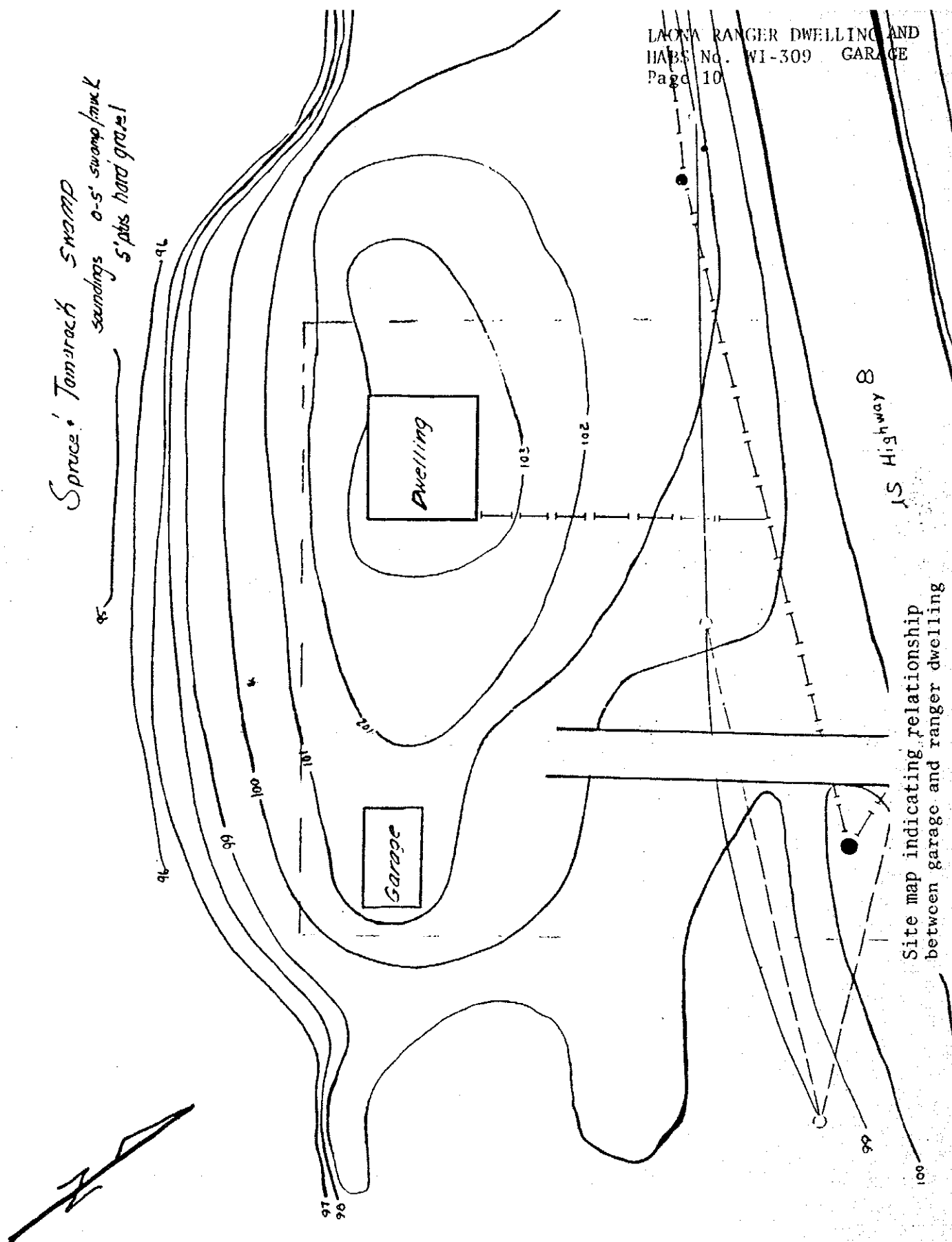
DETAIL
Scale 3/8" = 1'-0"

WALL CONSTRUCTION THRU SECTION A-A



SIDE. Copy of original standard plan No. 26: upper left, floor plan; lower left, side; lower right, northwest front of garage

Spruce! Tamarack Swamp
sandings 0-5' swamp/muck
5' plus hard gravel



Site map indicating relationship
between garage and ranger dwelling